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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BOGOTA 004278

SIPDIS

GENEVA FOR POLITICAL COUNSELOR JEFF DELAURENTIS

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SUBJECT: URIBE GIVES PUBLIC ULTIMATUM TO PARAMILITARIES

Classified By: Ambassador William B. Wood for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) On April 27, President Uribe issued an ultimatum to the country's illegal paramilitaries, warning that if they do not accept the GOC's conditions for peace talks -- including a verifiable cease-fire and a concentration of troops -- Government security forces will combat them until they are destroyed. He made it crystal clear he will not negotiate his commitment to extradite criminals to the U.S. He also rejected a so-called "humanitarian accord" with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The President's ultimatum, contained in an official communique issued by his office, reflected remarks he made at a regional security meeting in Casanare department. Uribe's communique also accused some paramilitaries and narcotics traffickers of threatening his life. Presidential security staff subsequently told us they have recently gathered intelligence pointing to possible paramilitary plots against his life. We will seek more detailed information on new security threats against President Uribe.

13. (C) Uribe's comments echo earlier ultimatums he sent the paramilitaries through Peace Commissioner Luis Carlos Restrepo. Until now, paramilitary leaders appeared to believe that Restrepo's ultimatums were his own and that he was not a trustworthy intermediary with the President.

14. (U) Text of official April 27 communique from the Presidency:

-- To the well-known and repeated threats against the President from the ELN and FARC must now be added threats over the past few weeks from elements of the illegal self-defense groups and narcotraffickers.

-- The Government offered a peace process to all illegal armed groups on condition of a cessation of hostilities.

-- The peace process with the illegal self-defense groups cannot advance in a climate of cease-fire violations, vendettas, narcotrafficking, and violent confrontations among criminal organizations.

-- If the self-defense forces want to advance in a serious peace process, they must demonstrate their will to peace by accepting a concentration zone, with clear rules and under the verification of the OAS. They must move toward demobilization. If this does not happen, the Government will continue combating them until they are eliminated.

-- The Government has submitted to Congress a bill for "Justice and Reparations" which is generous in its benefits and rigorous in regard to the Constitution and international law, preventing amnesty or pardon for those responsible for atrocious crimes.

-- Extradition should not be understood as an internal legal norm that generates nationalist opposition. It is an international legal norm that allows another country to punish those who commit crimes against its nationals. If extradition is prohibited, Colombia will be discredited internationally.

-- Extradition is not negotiable. Those who wish to avoid it must demonstrate to the international community their good faith and intent to reform.

-- The Government understands the pain of those kidnapped by the FARC, as well as the pain of their families. The Government will press on with its democratic security policy, one of the principal results of which was a 25 percent reduction in kidnappings last year and a 65 percent reduction so far in 2004.

-- The Government will not allow the FARC, through threats, to impose a Humanitarian Accord with conditions that weaken the democratic security policy.

End text.

WOOD